

DATE ISSUED: October 13, 2004 REPORT NO. 04-227

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Affordable Housing Collaborative Efforts on Universal Design for Residential Projects

REFERENCES: 1. Manager's Report 04-051, dated March 9, 2004, Status Report regarding the Affordable Housing Task Force's recommendations pertaining to Accessibility and Universal Design
2. Manager's Report 04-211, dated September 23, 2004, Status Report and Action Plan for Technical Advisory Committee
3. CCR04-004/Manager's Report 04-070, dated July 29, 2004, Affordable Housing Task Force Recommendations Update and Other Affordable Housing Activities (Citywide)

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

During the September 14, 2004 City Council meeting, Item 331, Talmadge Senior Village Housing Project, was discussed regarding inclusion of the Universal Design concept. Specifically, Wheelchair Access Now Today requested that City Council consider requiring all ground floor housing and elevator accessible units be designed and built to Universal Design on this project as City Housing Set-Aside funds were being used in the project. While this requirement was not included in the motion that approved the project, the City Manager was directed to address incorporating the Universal Design concept into City/Agency funded affordable housing projects.

The California Building Code (CBC) contains a comprehensive set of accessibility/adaptability provisions covering publicly funded residential projects.

Common use areas of such projects must be accessible and provide such features as accessible parking, accessible walks and sidewalks, accessible rental offices and recreational areas, and accessible building entrances.

Some of the mandated features within the affected dwelling units require the primary entrance to be accessible, an accessible path of travel within the unit, accessible light switches and outlets, all interior doors to be wide enough (2'-10") to permit a wheelchair to pass through, and lever hardware and adequate landing space. In addition, kitchens must be wide enough to permit a wheelchair user to maneuver and use appliances and other features. The kitchen sink and a portion of the counter must be accessible or be adaptable to allow a future tenant with a disability to modify the sink and counter to be accessible. At least one bathroom must provide adequate space inside and be adaptable to allow future installation of grab bars. The City of San Diego is required to comply with the CBC.

DISCUSSION

Improving affordable housing options and strategies was the primary mission of the Affordable Housing Task Force formed by City Council direction. The concept of Universal Design was included as part of their strategy. The Task Force made approximately sixty (60) separate recommendations in their report to City Council including four (4) related specifically to Accessibility and Universal Design. Manager's Report 04-051, dated March 9, 2004, was prepared as a status report on the progress of those recommendations. A City staff facilitated Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is actively pursuing the implementation of these four recommendations. An update on their progress is included as Attachment 3.

Additional actions have been taken by the San Diego Housing Commission (in which they are the funding Agency) and the Redevelopment Agency Affordable Housing Program on multi-family housing projects. Those actions are listed below.

Ongoing Activities Supporting Universal Design

San Diego Housing Commission – Assists with the financing/management of affordable housing and loan programs with HUD funds. HUD requires Fair Housing Accessibility for multi-family housing.

- In the fall of 2003, the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) initiated a proactive outreach and education program. The Program, involves initiating and holding discussions with interested developer teams, groups and architects. During these meetings a packet of information on Universal Design that describes the seven principles and their guidelines, an informational powerpoint presentation provided by the Center for an Accessible Society, a Universal Design Checklist, isometric drawings and a resource bulletin prepared by the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University is

provided. There have been ten (10) meetings with various teams held since December of last year.

- As of September 1, 2004 all SDHC Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA) include a requirement to address Universal Design.
- Five (5) projects (723 units) worth \$78.9 million have been constructed since January 2002 that include Universal Design features.
- Three (3) projects (291 units) worth \$51.3 million, currently under construction, include Universal Design features.
- Three (3) pipeline projects (191 units) worth \$34.6 million include Universal Design features.
- The SDHC provides grants up to \$1,000 to very low income (under 50% AMI) tenants with disabilities renting privately owned rental property within the City of San Diego to make accessibility improvements to their unit with the property owner's permission. If costs exceed \$1000, the tenant is responsible for the difference. A total of five (5) grants have been awarded totaling \$4,918.
- This year, the SDHC was recently awarded a \$500,000 grant from the State Cal Home Exterior Accessibility Grant for Renters (EAGR) Program. Grants will be made available to low income (under 80% AMI) tenants with disabilities and rental property owners with vacant units they want to make accessible. Rental owners must agree to give preference in renting these units to tenants with disabilities and provide the units at an affordable rent. Grants are provided up to \$3,000 per unit, \$10,000 for common area improvements for a maximum of \$25,000 for rental properties consisting of one to five residential units and up to \$40,000 for multi-family properties with six or more rental units. Grants are for permanent, exterior accessibility improvements such as concrete ramps, handrails, curb cuts, sidewalks, Braille signage, etc.

The City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency Affordable Housing Program – A collaborative comprised of the City's Redevelopment Division, Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC), Southeastern Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) and the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) formed to accelerate and encourage new affordable housing development citywide.

In January 2003, leveraging Redevelopment set-aside funds, the collaborative issued a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) announcing the availability of \$55 million of secured assets to provide gap financing for very low, low and moderate income housing. To date, under this Program, the Collaborative has received seventeen (17) applications for funding, fourteen (14) of which are either funded or still under review. Five (5) affordable housing projects have been approved for redevelopment funding to provide four hundred twenty-three (423) affordable units at a total Agency NOFA subsidy of \$22.18 million. The additional nine (9) projects are at various stages of staff analysis. In

addition to the applications received, staff is aware of eight (8) more potential projects that may be submitted for funding within the next three (3) months.

- Of the five projects funded, four (4), Talmadge Senior Village (all 91 units), Lillian Place (64 of the total 74 units), Harbor View (all 97 units) and Island/Market Centre (173 of total 212 units) include Universal Design features. The fifth project was land acquisition only.

- The City Redevelopment Division has an additional seven (7) projects (695 units) in various stages of development that include Universal Design features.

Attachment 1 is a detailed list of affordable housing projects funded by either the Affordable Housing Program, SDHC or CCDC that provides additional information. The Team has also prepared an action plan to increase our efforts on both Affordable Housing NOFA and other citywide housing projects. The plan contains actions that will be taken immediately and others that required additional time. The plan is presented as Attachment 2.

We continue to be committed to addressing the housing needs of the citizens of San Diego and will explore all avenues available to recommend appropriate policies and procedures that would increase the amount of housing choices for people with disabilities and seniors.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Lamont Ewell
City Manager

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Attachments:

1. [Universal Design Components](#)
2. [City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency Affordable Housing Program Action Plan](#)
3. [Development Services Department Update](#)